

FAXES IN ENGLAND AND IN AMERICA

Heavy Cost of the Government in Great Britain.

EQUALS \$14 FOR EACH INHABITANT

Comparison Between the Sources of Revenue in That Country and in the United States—History of the British National Debt—Other Comparative Statistics of Real Interest.

W. E. Curtis writes in the Chicago Record: Americans who are complaining of taxation and growling about the burdens imposed by the Dingley law can find very little consolation in the revenue returns and the budgets of Great Britain. The receipts of the general government during the last fiscal year, which ended March 31, 1897, were \$60,992,735.

The receipts of the United States government for the first fiscal year, ended June 30, 1897, were \$37,184,728, which, with a population of 70,000,000, is equivalent to a tax of about 24 per cent. Last year was the most prosperous in the history of Great Britain, and it is expected that the present year will show a still greater increase in the revenues, but there is no talk of reducing taxation.

A few years ago the government of the United States suffered the unusual affliction of a surplus revenue. In 1887 it amounted to \$55,500,000. In 1888 to \$67,500,000, in 1889 to \$49,000,000 and in 1890 the receipts were \$45,000,000 more than the expenditures; whereupon congress struck off the principal sources of revenue, and there has been a deficit varying from \$1,000,000 to \$70,000,000 every year since. In Great Britain an abundant revenue is considered an indication of national prosperity and a satisfactory fiscal policy. A surplus is considered an advantage, and is applied to the reduction of the national debt as long as it lasts.

The following is a list of the chief sources of revenue of the British government, and the amount received from each expressed in American money:

Table with 2 columns: Source of Revenue, Amount. Includes Customs, Excise, Property and Land, etc.

Although Great Britain is a free-trade country that government collects more than half as much money from import duties as the United States, the total in that country for the last fiscal year being \$136,283,283. The import tax in Great Britain is imposed on articles that are considered luxuries—such as tea, coffee, cocoa, tobacco, wines and liquors, beer, perfumery, soap, confectionery, fruits, playing cards, silverware and some other articles of a similar character.

The excise and stamp taxes in England correspond very closely to our internal-revenue taxation. The receipts from that quarter in the United States amount to \$46,241,283, while in England they reached nearly \$200,000,000. In the United States the internal-revenue tax is imposed upon tobacco, beer, liquor, spirits of all kinds, playing cards and articles which contain alcohol. In England the excise reaches as far likewise drawn from tobacco and drink, and no other country, except, perhaps Russia, obtains so large a proportion of its revenue from that source. This is a cause of great complaint. The reformers declare that the revenue collected from the millions and not from the millionaires, and they demand a removal or at least a reduction of the taxes on tea, coffee, tobacco and beer on the theory that they have become necessities of life.

The receipts from the sale of stamps in Great Britain amounted to \$7,000,000 last year. These stamps were attached to legal documents—such as leases, mortgages, conveyances, insurance policies, bills of exchange, drafts, bank checks and all bills for merchandise purchased above two shillings and six pence. Postage stamps and internal-revenue stamps are interchangeable, which is a great public convenience.

But the millionaires add their share to the income of the government through the tax on legacies and estates, which was attempted by the

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legislature in New York last year and caused such a tremendous outcry among the rich. The "death tax," as it is familiarly called in England, is something appalling to those who are not accustomed to it. The heirs of every man who dies are required to contribute from one to eight shillings to the government for every £100 in money or property that they receive as legacies, with one per cent upon the value of entailed estates. In addition to this there is a legacy duty of from one to five per cent, according to the relationship, distant relatives paying the maximum amount. There is a still further tax of five per cent upon all profits or net revenues received from estates that are in chancery or in the hands of receivers, or that for any reason remain undivided.

All property passing at death pays a graduated duty upon its appraised value, the appraisement being made by the probate court. When it exceeds £1,000 the heirs must pay two shillings for every £100. When it exceeds £10,000 they must pay four shillings for every £100; when it exceeds £100,000 they must pay six shillings; when it exceeds £250,000 they must pay seven shillings, and when it exceeds £1,000,000 they must pay eight shillings per £100.

Walter Lewis Winans, of Baltimore, died in England last June, leaving about \$12,000,000, from which the government received £250,000, or about \$1,000,000. During the last year property to the amount of \$11,995,025,000 was inherited in Great Britain, which property paid \$69,816,105 as government duties.

The increased wealth of Great Britain is shown by the fact that during the last forty years the customs receipts have advanced about 35 per cent. The excise dues about 50 per cent, the income tax about 38 per cent.

In the United States liquor and tobacco licenses are issued to all retail dealers for the same fixed fee. An increased fee is charged for licenses to wholesale dealers. In Great Britain there is a graduated scale according to the amount of business transacted, the lowest license tax being \$25 and the highest \$150.

Every person who owns a gun in England has to pay ten shillings a year to the government, and if that gun is used to shoot game the owner is required to take out a license, which costs him \$5 for one month, \$10 for six months, \$15 for the year.

There is also what is known as the "establishment" tax, under which families who employ male servants are required to pay fifteen shillings a year head money for each. The total number of servants thus taxed last year was 195,469. It costs fifteen shillings to keep a two-wheel carriage, \$12 a year to keep a four-wheel carriage for two or more horses and \$5.25 for a four-wheel carriage for one horse. The total number of carriages thus taxed is 549,821 and the receipts from that source amount to \$3,246,315.

In the United States dogs are taxed by the municipal governments. In England they are taxed by the general government. Each dog has to pay 8 1/2 cents in England. In the United States the average fee is \$2. In England there are 1,345,283 dogs, which pay \$2,525,000 in taxes.

People who indulge in crests and armorial bearings in England have to pay a tax on their vanity. If their coat of arms is attached to their carriage the duty is \$10.50; if it is attached to their doors or appears in any way upon their houses or fences or gates the charge is the same. If it is otherwise worn the charge is \$5.25.

There is also a tax on silver and gold plate used for domestic purposes or ornamentation. The income tax yields a revenue of \$82,250,000. The people are divided into five schedules and the tax is graduated those enjoying the largest income paying the heaviest taxes.

The land and house tax is also burdensome, being from 2 pence to 9 pence in the pound. In the United States the postoffice department is a very expensive concern, the receipts being from \$10,000,000 to \$12,000,000 less than the expenditures annually. In Great Britain, where the population is dense and there are no broad prairies and mountain ranges to be crossed and long rivers to be navigated, the postal service is a source of considerable revenue. Last year the receipts were \$29,000,000 and the expenditures were \$35,750,000, which showed a profit of \$23,550,000. The telegraph and telephone service, which is conducted by the postoffice department, does not quite pay expenses, the receipts last year being \$14,550,000 and the expenses \$14,805,000.

The government of Great Britain has found the Suez canal a paying investment, which is a fact worthy of the consideration of our congress in connection with the construction of the Nicaragua canal. The revenues from that source last year were nearly \$5,000,000.

The following comparisons between the fixed expenses of the British government and those of the United States will be found interesting:

Table comparing Great Britain and United States expenses: Royal family, Interest public dept., Pensions, Judiciary, Army, Navy, Civil-service salaries.

The total interest-bearing debt of Great Britain now amounts to \$89,146,878, or \$2,945,734,390 in our money, which is equivalent to about \$72 per capita of the population. The interest-bearing debt of the United States is \$847,365,320, or about \$12 per capita.

Charles II. had the honor of founding the national debt of Great Britain. Before his time, when the King wanted money he used to get it from goldsmiths or bankers by pledging his jewels or giving mortgages upon the hereditary property of the crown, like any other gentleman, or by squeezing his barons. The "mercenary monarch" I have named appropriated the property of many of his nobles and gave them notes of hand as security. His brother, James II., who also needed funds, followed the same course, and when William III. came to the throne in 1688 he found great trouble in obtaining sufficient money to pay the necessary expenses of the court. Being a prudent man, he "consolidated" or "funded" the obligations issued by his predecessors in order to consolidate the nobility and strengthen his own position with the people.

\$12,750,000, and the annual interest charge was \$4,000,000. Then came the war of the Spanish succession under the great Marlborough, which cost \$50,000,000, and at the death of Anne the debt was increased to \$37,000,000. Before the outbreak of the American revolution there was created a series of wars with France and Germany, including the seven-years' war, which increased the debt \$82,000,000. The struggle with the American colonies was the result of taxation to pay for those wars. But that cost \$27,000,000, and increased the national debt to £237,400,000. In 1816, after the wars with Napoleon, which cost over \$4,000,000,000, the debt reached £846,000,000. Then followed a gradual reduction, by careful financing, until 1854, and when the Crimean war broke out the debt was reduced to £794,000,000. The Crimean war cost \$70,000,000. Since that time the wars of England have cost £45,000,000, not including the regular maintenance of the army and navy.

The usual way of reducing the debt is by the application of the surplus revenues in the purchase of what are known as terminable annuities, and by the sinking fund, where there was created a fund for the purpose of paying off the debt. The regular receipts of the government \$7,500,000 is added to this fund every year. Large sums of money have been bequeathed to the government by wealthy patriots to assist in meeting the public debt, and it is still very large and next to France the largest of any nation in the world.

Daredevil Bravery.

From the Buffalo Express. "The most daredevil piece of heroism I ever saw was by some negro before Fort Pillow, when I was a prisoner inside the fort and Gen. Pillow was lying in front of it with his leg shot off," was the way Charles Cotton of Company C of the One Hundred and Sixty-first New York Infantry began a story of valiant rescue that he told to some negro veterans.

"Gen. Payne's leg had been shot off in the first charge," he continued, "and he was lying hidden behind some rocks in front of the fort when his troops were forming plans to rescue him. The scolding fire from the fort swept that spot, and no officer dared to command any of his men to go to certain death in what looked like a vain attempt to rescue their chief. While the men were deliberating a negro stepped up and said, 'We might as well run our chances now as any other time, and I, for one, will make the attempt.' He was a handsome fellow, and the spirit he displayed was at once equalled by that of eleven other negroes, who stepped out and volunteered their services. A stretcher was brought and four of them started, but had only gone a few yards when every one was shot dead. A moment after four others of the volunteers rushed out, and, picking up the stretcher, carried it a few yards further, when they, too, were killed. The four who were left went ahead as if nothing had happened, and two of them came back alive with the general while the other two were left dead at the pile of rocks where Gen. Payne had been lying. Gen. Payne is still living, and I am told, the two noble fellows who rescued him have wanted for nothing ever since."

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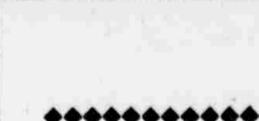
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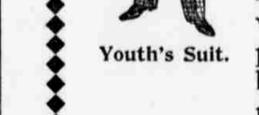
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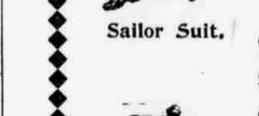
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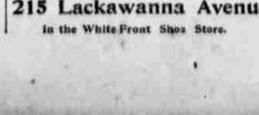
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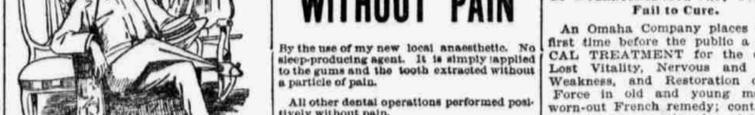
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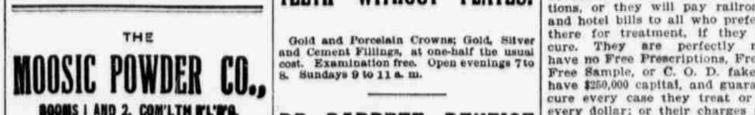
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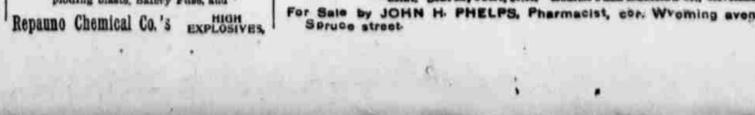
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